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ABSTRACT

This handbook is intended to provide teachers with background information about the writing skills needed by General Educational Development (GED) students as well as practical instructional activities for use in the adult basic education/GED classroom. A guide to using the ideabook explains the POWER format that involves Prewriting, Organizing, Writing, Editing, and Rewriting. It lists general objectives and discusses use of the 10 writing tasks that move the students developmentally from the concrete to the abstract. Each task is composed of these components: a list of key objectives; a prompt that contains background information, directions, and key words; thought questions (Prewriting); student activities; directions for the Organizing, Writing, Editing, and Rereading stages that the teacher may use verbatim; and an additional prompt, which can be used at the teacher's discretion as extra classroom practice. Two reproducible student forms for each activity are included in the appendix. One consists solely of a prompt; an expanded version provides all the material found on the teacher sheets. These reproducible sheets are also appended: a student record sheet, a summary sheet of the five steps in the POWER model, and instructor and student copies of a Bertrand Russell essay. (YLB)

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# HANDBOOK ON WRITING

# FOR CLEP INSTRUCTORS

# IN ADULT BASIC EDUCATION

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# IDEABOOK ON WRITING

# FOR GED INSTRUCTORS

# IN ADULT BASIC EDUCATION

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## INTRODUCTION

The 1988 GED test consists of two parts. The first part indirectly measures student ability through a multiple choice format. Students apply the principles of sentence structure, usage, and mechanics as they edit and revise sentences in the context of one or more paragraphs. A direct measure of student writing is also required in the form of an essay question calling for expository writing on a given topic. Students have 45 minutes in which to generate ideas, decide on language structures, compose sentences and paragraphs, and revise their writing. Each student's final test score is a composite score which reflects their performance on both the essay and the multiple choice sections of the test. In general, the essay score will account for 35 to 40 percent of the total writing skills test score.

The essay composition component of the 1988 GED test marks a dramatic revision in the test and has important implications for GED instructors. Douglas Whitney, Director of the GED Testing Service, believes that many of our students will need "intensive instruction in writing before taking the GED Tests." A recent study comparing scores of high school seniors with GED examinees supports this. Those taking the GED did not write as well; however, Whitney believes that "a majority of the GED examinees would earn an essay score that is at least comparable to the minimum GED passing score in most states." Others are less optimistic. A recent article in Lifelong Learning suggests that pre-GED or ABE classes "will be filled with people who will need a great deal of time and attention. They will not be able

to pass the GED exam after writing two or three papers and completing a few workbook pages!" The author of that article believes this group will be our greatest challenge and that if we fail to reach them, it will mean that the "number of people passing the exam will decline significantly." Opinions differ, but all who are involved in this change process agree on one thing: Effective writing instruction is a must!

To meet this new challenge, teachers must anticipate the problems that students may have and develop instructional strategies to help students build the writing foundation they need to successfully pass the GED test. The purpose of this handbook is to provide teachers with background information about the writing skills GED students need and practical instructional activities for use in the ABE/GED classroom.

## GUIDE TO USING THE IDEABOOK

### Notes to the Teacher

This Ideabook can help you help students develop the thinking and writing skills necessary to write an expository essay with an argumentative edge as required in the GED Writing Sample. The topics and exercises in this book were put together to get unprepared students writing and lead them through a progression of topics which will develop the expected skills. The assignments move developmentally from the concrete to the abstract. Students are first asked to write easier narrative compositions and will gradually be expected to produce more and more complex work.

The POWER format reflects research supporting the teaching of writing as a process that begins with thinking and planning (the Prewriting and Organizing stage), progresses into Writing, takes a second look at the ideas and presentation (the Editing and Rereading stage) and concludes with a final draft for the reader. The POWER technique presented in this Ideabook enables students to develop a logical way to approach the writing task.

In the writing process approach the teacher spends most of the class time working with students individually or in small groups. Students are shown how to brainstorm and generate ideas about a topic. They learn to select interesting and appropriate information for their papers. While fellow students read each others' papers and suggest changes, the teacher is available to work on specific writing problems. Papers are edited and revised and then shared with the teacher and the group.

Through repeated practice students develop habits which will be valuable in the testing situation.

In addition, the objectives stressed in these activities are directly related to the criteria by which the GED Writing Sample is evaluated. Key objectives for each lesson are numbered according to the following list of basic skills and understandings involved in writing for the GED Writing Sample. Our students must learn to:

1. **DEFINE/INTERPRET THE TASK**: Read, understand, and accurately follow the directions given for the actual Writing Sample question. The discussion and clarification of the prompt that introduces each sample exercise will familiarize students with the format used in the GED test itself. Further, the topic prompts require students to work with essential vocabulary concepts to improve their ability to understand the question being asked. Terms such as cause and effect, opinion, composition, advantages and disadvantages are introduced and should be discussed in the classroom.

2. **GENERATE IDEAS**: Recall experiences and specific information related to the topic in order to develop ideas. Discussion, brainstorming, listing, and freewriting activities as suggested in the sample exercises promote the development of this skill.

3. **FORMULATE AND EXPRESS AN OPINION**: Take a position and support it with relevant information: reasons, examples, and details. Group discussion and the writing tasks suggested in this book work toward developing an awareness of the difference between relating personal experiences (narrative story writing) and expressing an opinion about a given subject (expository writing). The progression of topics outlined in this book moves the student from personal narrative to idea or expository writing in a gradual but deliberate way.

4. **SUPPORT IDEAS WITH REASONS, EXAMPLES, AND SPECIFIC DETAILS**: Select and incorporate information that is relevant, specific, and appropriate to the general topic and the position taken by the writer. Grouping specifics to support a main idea can be taught through discussion of ideas and papers, the coding of lists, classifying, and categorizing using key words. All

these strategies are helpful in communicating to inexperienced writers how ideas and supporting information fit together.

5. **WORK WITH THE BASIC FORM OF EXPOSITORY WRITING (INTRODUCTION, BODY, AND CONCLUSION):** Write a clear statement of the main idea in their introduction and build on this throughout the essay. Emphasis on introducing the subject and setting the stage in each sample exercise should help students appreciate the importance of a strong introduction. Students should understand that the body of the essay is where the main ideas are explained with specific examples and details. The conclusion should connect the parts of the essay and remind readers of the main idea.

6. **ORGANIZE WRITING LOGICALLY AND COHERENTLY:** Include ideas which are relevant and structured to reflect a plan of organization. Restating the question as a topic statement is a useful technique for students at this level. Incorporating the POWER strategy in approaching each writing assignment gives students practice with developing a way of organizing their thoughts. Students should internalize this strategy as they work through the sample exercises.

7. **DEMONSTRATE COMMAND OF STANDARD WRITTEN ENGLISH:** Use appropriate sentence structure, punctuation, and grammar to convey ideas clearly and precisely. Rereading and editing papers and receiving instructor/group feedback develop these critical skills.

Finally, the format provides an opportunity for discussion which is critical for less experienced writers. Open discussion encourages students to explore a wider range of possibilities through the sharing of ideas in the classroom. A major goal at this level is to help these writers learn how to generate ideas and how to look at situations from new and different perspectives.

Special Features:

THE PROMPT

Students need to be able to identify three parts of the prompt: background information, directions, and key words.

Teacher prompts have been specially typed to facilitate instruction in this skill. The background information is typed in normal upper case/lower case form. THE DIRECTIONS ARE CAPITALIZED. Key words are underlined both in the prompt and throughout the lesson.

## STUDENT WORK SHEETS

Two reproducible forms for each activity are included in the appendix. One consists solely of a prompt. This may be used in group teaching situations where the teacher is able to work from the instructor materials. Students have the prompt to work from but must be guided through the discussion. An expanded version is intended for more individualized settings. Directions and suggestions are included for the student to use during the writing process. This form may also be preferable for use with a mixed approach: some group and some individualized. Hopefully one of these formats will be useful in your setting!

## STUDENT RECORD SHEET

A reproducible student record form has been included for record keeping purposes. Recording comments about specific papers and other documentation can help the teacher monitor student progress and plan more effectively.

## EDITING BOX

A special section on the student record sheet has been set aside to provide for specific individual skill development. The teacher should use that space to designate a writing skill that the student had problems with on a previous paper. Students are

then reminded during the editing stage of their writing to check carefully for that specific skill.

## POWER SHEET

A summary sheet of the 5 steps presented in this Ideabook is available for teachers to copy and distribute to their students. Some brief definitions of the strategies and skills to be applied in the activities are included.

## ADDITIONAL PROMPTS

An extra prompt is included for each writing task. These can be used at the teacher's discretion as extra classroom practice, a learning assessment, or home assignments.

In summary, this Ideabook should help you provide a foundation of basic writing skills for your students. The activities also provide a framework for vocabulary and conceptual development. The students must polish these skills through practice. They need to do a lot of writing--with feedback. You must create a positive environment where these writing activities can be an effective instructional tool!

References:

1. Dauzat, S.V. and Dauzat, J. A. "A new GED: gearing up for change," Lifelong Learning Vol. 10, No. 6, 1987.

2. Fadate, L. H. and Hammond, D. B. "Intended learning outcomes: teaching writing to adults," Lifelong Learning Vol. 11, No. 3, 1987.

3. Taylor, K. K. "Teaching writing in the GED program," Lifelong Learning Vol. 10, No. 4, 1987.

4. Swartz, R. and Whitney, D. R. "The new GED writing skills test: some clarifications and suggestions," Lifelong Learning Vol. 11, No. 2, 1987.

(A copy of these articles was sent to each ABE program director.)

WRITING TASKS

(INSTRUCTOR COPIES)

WRITING TASK #1:

KEY OBJECTIVES:

1. Interpreting the question
2. Generating ideas
3. Understanding the difference between retelling a personal experience (the story) and expressing an idea (the effect of the experience on the person)
4. Understanding the importance of using specific details in telling a story or explaining an idea

PROMPT: We usually remember experiences which have affected us in some important way. They may have caused a change in our attitude, or our behavior. Because these experiences stand out in our memory, we often can recall specific details of the situation: where it happened, what sounds we heard or what feelings we experienced. WRITE A PAPER IN WHICH YOU DESCRIBE AN EXPERIENCE YOU REMEMBER BECAUSE IT AFFECTED YOU IN SOME WAY. AFTER YOU DESCRIBE THE EXPERIENCE IN DETAIL, TELL WHAT YOU THINK THE EFFECT OF THIS EXPERIENCE WAS ON YOU. WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU LEARNED FROM THE EXPERIENCE? HOW DO YOU THINK YOU CHANGED AS A RESULT OF THIS EXPERIENCE?

PREWRITING: Thought Questions:

1. Which sentences give background information to get us thinking about the question?

2. Which sentence(s) tells us what to do?

3. How many things must the writer do to answer this question completely? What are they?

4. What are important words in this question that help you understand the assignment more clearly?

5. What is the difference between describing the experience and telling about its effect on you?

6. What experiences are you more likely to remember--good or bad?

7. What kinds of details can you remember about your experiences: sounds, sights, smells, tastes, and feelings?

8. How do our experiences affect our lives?

9. What kinds of lessons do we learn from our experiences?

Activities:

LIST: Write down at least five experiences that you can remember.

FREEWRITE: Choose one experience from the list and describe it in detail.

DISCUSS: Share your freewriting with the group or your teacher/tutor. Discuss how this experience affected you or what you learned from it.

ORGANIZING: As you organize your thoughts and ideas to get ready to write, remember that the experience you're retelling is like a story: things happened in a certain order. Look at your freewriting to make sure you have the right sequence or chronological order for the things that happened.

WRITING: Now you're ready to start writing. Remember to start the first paragraph with a sentence that tells the main idea of the paper: the reason this experience is important. Your description of the experience comes next. After you have described the experience, start a new paragraph to explain how the experience affected you.

EDITING: Check your paper carefully in order to correct errors in spelling, punctuation, grammar, or usage. You should check your paper to make sure that as you told your story you used past tense verbs.

If possible, have another student in your writing class read your paper and make suggestions about corrections or ideas that could be made more clear.

REREADING: Read the prompt AND your paper again to make sure that you have answered the question that was asked. Make sure the ideas make sense and are expressed clearly.

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ADDITIONAL PROMPT:

Holidays are usually thought of as happy times when families celebrate together and enjoy traditions. But psychologists have found that for some people holidays can be difficult or depressing. DESCRIBE A SPECIFIC HOLIDAY EXPERIENCE YOU REMEMBER THAT WAS DIFFICULT OR SAD FOR YOU. AFTER YOU DESCRIBE THE SITUATION IN DETAIL, TRY TO EXPLAIN WHY THIS PARTICULAR HOLIDAY WAS HARD FOR YOU.

WRITING TASK #2

KEY OBJECTIVES:

1. Interpreting the question
2. Generating ideas
6. Organizing specifics around a main idea

PROMPT: Many people in our lives have had a positive effect on us. It might have been a grandparent who shared their time and experience with us. Perhaps it was a boss who gave us an opportunity to show what we could do. WRITE A PAPER DESCRIBING SOMEONE WHO HAS HAD A POSITIVE EFFECT ON YOU. GIVE SPECIFIC DETAILS ABOUT THIS PERSON AND HOW THEY CHANGED OR INFLUENCED YOUR LIFE.

PREWRITING:

Thought Questions:

1. Which sentences give background information to get us thinking about the question?

2. Which sentence(s) tells us what to do?

3. What are the important words in this question that help you understand the assignment more clearly?

4. Who are some of the people that have affected you?

5. In what ways do people affect our lives?

Activities:

FREEWRITE: Write as much as you can about the person you will be describing in order to remember more details.

LIST: List the ways this person affected you.

DISCUSS: Read your freewriting and then tell how this person affected you.

ORGANIZING:

GROUP: Put details about similar ideas together to describe the person's appearance, attitudes, behaviors, etc.

CHOOSE: Select the most important way this person affected you and explain the effect this person had on your life.

**WRITING:** Introduce your subject: Restate the topic as a main idea sentence by telling the reader whom you will be describing and how this person affected you.

Write a paragraph which describes the person. Then write a paragraph explaining the person's effect on you.

Write a concluding comment. Be creative!

**EDITING:** Check your paper to catch any errors in grammar, spelling, punctuation, or usage. Check the EDITING BOX on your student record sheet to see which specific skill you should be editing for on this paper.

If possible work with another student to get their suggestions for corrections or clarifications.

**REREADING:** Read the prompt AND your paper again to be sure you have answered the question being asked. Your ideas should be communicated clearly and make sense when the paper is read as a whole.

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ADDITIONAL PROMPT:

We've all had teachers we'll never forget! Sometimes we remember them because they taught us to love learning. Sometimes we remember teachers because of negative things that happened in their class. Sometimes, they just had a funny name or some unusual habit that sticks in our memory. WRITE A COMPOSITION ABOUT A TEACHER YOU REMEMBER, DESCRIBING THE TEACHER AND THE CLASSROOM IN AS MUCH DETAIL AS YOU CAN. THEN TELL WHY YOU THINK THIS TEACHER IS SOMEONE YOU'VE REMEMBERED OVER THE YEARS!

WRITING TASK #3

KEY OBJECTIVES:

4. Supporting an answer (reasons for each object being taken)
5. Using the basic expository form
6. Understanding that each paragraph is organized around a main thought

PROMPT: A tornado warning has just been announced over the radio! You must leave your house and go to a nearby city. You can only take three objects with you. What would you take? WRITE A COMPOSITION IN WHICH YOU TELL WHAT THREE OBJECTS YOU WOULD TAKE IN THIS SITUATION. DESCRIBE EACH OBJECT IN DETAIL AND GIVE REASONS FOR YOUR CHOICES.

PREWRITING: Thought Questions:

1. Which sentences give background information to get you thinking about the question?

2. Which sentence(s) tells us what to do for this paper?

3. What are the important words in this question that help you understand the assignment more clearly?

4. Have you ever been in a similar situation--a tornado, flood, or fire?

5. Would you want to take objects you might need for survival or objects of sentimental value?

6. What factors would influence your choice?

Activities:

LIST: List at least ten objects you might take. Don't limit yourself at this stage. Write down every object you can think of that you might want to take.

DISCUSS: Choose one object from the list and describe it in detail to the group or your teacher/tutor. Tell why you would take it.

ORGANIZING: CHOOSE: Decide which three objects on your list you would take.

CLUSTER: Around each object note descriptive details and possible reasons for taking it.

**WRITING:** Introduce the subject by explaining the situation. Remember, your INTRODUCTION should set the stage for the reader. Be sure to tell why you are having to leave your home and being forced to make these choices.

(Example: After cleaning house all day, I sat down to have some iced tea and watch T.V. Suddenly a broadcaster interrupted the program and announced a tornado watch. I was told to leave my house for a shelter in a nearby city. I could take only three items with me, so I had to make some decisions.)

Then restate the topic as a main idea sentence.

(Example: I decided to take my photo album, my grandmother's teapot, and a flashlight.)

After introducing the topic, write a paragraph about each object. These three paragraphs will form what is called the BODY of the paper, the main part. In each of the three paragraphs, you describe one object and then tell why you are taking it.

Finally write a CONCLUSION that reminds the reader of the purpose, or reason, for this composition.

(Example: It was hard deciding what to take, but I felt comfortable with my choices as I left the house.)

**EDITING:** Check your paper for errors in grammar, spelling, punctuation, or usage. Look at the EDITING BOX to see if there is a specific skill you should be checking.

If possible let another student read your paper. Consider their comments about corrections or ideas that could be more clear and decide on any changes you want to make.

**REREADING:** Read the prompt AND your paper again to be sure you have answered the question being asked. Your ideas should be communicated clearly and make sense when the paper is read as a whole.

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ADDITIONAL PROMPT:

The world is full of interesting people: actors, politicians, athletes, musicians, etc. Imagine that you were able to meet any three people in the world. Who would you choose? WRITE A COMPOSITION OF ABOUT 200 WORDS IDENTIFYING THREE PEOPLE YOU WOULD LIKE TO MEET. DESCRIBE EACH PERSON AND THE REASONS YOU WOULD LIKE TO MEET THEM.

WRITING TASK # 4

KEY OBJECTIVES:

2. Generating ideas

4. Combining specific details into larger groups

5. Using the basic expository form

6. Organizing writing logically and coherently (sequential stages in a process)

PROMPT: Have you ever asked someone for directions or instructions about something and ended up being more confused after their explanation than when you started?! Being able to give clear instructions is an important skill. It requires you to organize your thoughts in a logical way and present them clearly. WRITE A PAPER IN WHICH YOU EXPLAIN TO THE READER THE STEP-BY-STEP DIRECTIONS FOR DOING SOMETHING (FOR EXAMPLE, HOW TO GET CHILDREN READY FOR SCHOOL, HOW TO DECORATE A BIRTHDAY CAKE, OR HOW TO CHANGE THE OIL IN YOUR CAR). REMEMBER TO INCLUDE ALL THE INFORMATION THEY WOULD NEED TO UNDERSTAND THIS PROCESS.

PREWRITING: Thought Questions:

1. Which sentences give background information to get you thinking about the question?

2. Which sentence(s) tells us what to do for this paper?

3. What are the important words in this question that help you understand the assignment more clearly?

4. What do you do or make that you could explain to another person?

5. What are some of the steps involved?

6. How might we group the steps?

Activities:

LIST: Decide on your topic. List all the different steps in this process.

**ORGANIZING:**

GROUP: Can you group the steps into stages?

(Example: Getting my family off to school and work).

| | |
|---|---|
| First group | 1. waking everyone up |
| Second group | 2. feeding everyone |
| Third group | 3. helping everyone get ready to leave |
| Fourth group | 4. cleaning up after the family leaves |

**WRITING:** Your INTRODUCTION should tell the reader what process you will describe in your paper. In the BODY of your paper each paragraph will be about a stage in the process. Each paragraph needs to include all the necessary explanation and details. Finally, write a CONCLUSION that tells the reader what the results of this process are.

**EDITING:** Check your paper for errors in grammar, spelling, punctuation, or usage. The EDITING BOX on your student record sheet should remind you to be especially watchful for a specific error you had problems with in your last paper.

Let another student read your paper to see if your explanation is clear and to make suggestions.

**REREADING:** Look again at the prompt and read it carefully. As you reread your paper, make sure it answers the question that was asked.

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ADDITIONAL PROMPT:

Recent bestsellers have discussed and debated the life stages that each of us experiences and the activities or behaviors that are typical of each. If you were asked to divide your life into three stages, what would you call each stage and how would you describe each? WRITE A PAPER IDENTIFYING AND DESCRIBING THE THREE STAGES OF YOUR LIFE TO DATE. BE SPECIFIC AND INCLUDE EXAMPLES WHEN POSSIBLE.

WRITING TASK #5

KEY OBJECTIVES:

4. Choosing relevant information
5. Using the basic form of expository writing
6. Prioritizing ideas and sequencing paragraphs

PROMPT: Every job has its good and bad points. In some jobs, the good points outweigh the bad points. Those are usually the jobs people find most rewarding! WRITE A PAPER DESCRIBING A REWARDING JOB YOU HAVE HAD OR WOULD LIKE TO HAVE. EXPLAIN BOTH THE ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF THE JOB. BE SPECIFIC AND USE EXAMPLES. TELL WHY YOU WANT THIS JOB IN SPITE OF THE DISADVANTAGES.

PREWRITING:

Thought Questions:

1. Which sentences give background information to get us thinking about the question?

2. Which sentence(s) tells us what to do?

3. How many things must the writer do to answer this question completely? What are they?

4. What are important words in this question that help you understand the assignment more clearly?

5. Have you had a job that you liked or do you have a job in mind that you would like to have?

6. Describe that job to your teacher/tutor or the group.

7. What are the advantages of that job?

8. What are its disadvantages?

Activities:

LIST: List questions a person might ask about a job to find out its good and bad points.

BRAINSTORM: Use these questions to help you discover additional good and bad points about your "dream" job.

ORGANIZING:

GROUP: Put the ideas you discovered into two columns: advantages and disadvantages.

CHOOSE: Decide what ideas to include and what ideas to leave out of your paper. Decide if you will write about the advantages or the disadvantages first.

PRIORITIZE: Put the least important details first in your list and the most important last. Use that order when you're writing the paragraph too.

**WRITING:** The INTRODUCTION for your topic should state your opinion about the job (the first paragraph).

In the BODY write two paragraphs: one telling the advantages and one describing the disadvantages of your "dream" job. The first sentence in each of the paragraphs tells the purpose of the paragraph and connects it to the main idea of the composition.

(Example: Even though this job appeals to me, there are some disadvantages.)

Write a CONCLUSION restating your opinion about this job.

**EDITING:** Check your paper for errors in grammar, spelling, punctuation, or usage. Look at the EDITING BOX to see if there is a specific skill you had trouble with in your last paper.

If possible let another student read your paper. Consider their comments about corrections or ideas that could be clarified.

**REREADING:** Read the prompt AND your paper again to make sure that you have answered the question that was asked. Make sure the ideas make sense and are expressed clearly.

**********

ADDITIONAL PROMPT:

Television has come a long way since its introduction to the American family about 30 years ago. In those days, programs were only in black and white, and few families owned a T.V. set. Today most families own at least one T.V. and enjoy watching a variety of programs. There are both advantages and disadvantages to our growing attachment to television. WRITE A COMPOSITION EXPLAINING THE ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF AMERICANS WATCHING MORE TELEVISION. BE SPECIFIC AND SUPPORT YOUR IDEAS WITH EXAMPLES.

WRITING TASK #6

KEY OBJECTIVES:

2. Generating ideas

3. Expressing a personal opinion

4. Grouping supporting ideas

5. Using the basic expository form

PROMPT: Although we may consider material things important, we also value people and beliefs that are intangible: peace, love, and faith. Our values reflect our ideas of what is important in life. WRITE A PAPER ABOUT WHAT IS IMPORTANT IN YOUR LIFE AND WHY. BE SURE TO GIVE SPECIFIC EXAMPLES WHENEVER YOU CAN.

PREWRITING: Thought Questions:

1. Which sentences give background information to get us thinking about the question?

2. Which sentence(s) tells us what to do?

3. What are important words in this question that help you understand the assignment more clearly?

4. What is important in your life?

5. What do we value about objects? about beliefs? about people?

Activities:

LIST: List at least twenty persons, objects, ideas, or feelings that are important to you.

ORGANIZING:

GROUP: How could you group your list according to some specific categories? Decide on a "key word" for each category. (Example: hobbies, people, money, religion, learning, entertainment) You could use an abbreviated code: H = hobbies, P = people and so on. Mark your list accordingly.

CLUSTER: Decide on two or three categories that you want to write about. Cluster details and examples around each "key word".

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**WRITING:** Introduce your subject in the first paragraph. Rewriting the topic into a statement of the main idea is often a good way to begin an INTRODUCTION.

Organize and write a paragraph around each "key word." These paragraphs will become the BODY of your paper. Remember each paragraph should start with a sentence telling what you will be writing about. The rest of the paragraph will tell why this is important to you and give examples.

The CONCLUSION of your paper can be 1 or 2 sentences summarizing what you value.

**EDITING:** Check your paper to catch any errors in grammar, spelling, punctuation, or usage. Check the EDITING BOX on your student record sheet to see which specific skill you should be editing for on this paper.

**REREADING:** Read the prompt AND your paper again to be sure you have answered the question being asked. Your ideas should be communicated clearly and make sense when the paper is read as a whole.

**********

ADDITIONAL PROMPT:

Instead of another writing activity, you might want to have students read the Bertrand Russell essay (see appendix). Discuss how the essay was organized--Introduction, Body, Conclusion. Have them find examples or details about each value. In other words, work backwards to see how this writer put his ideas together.

WRITING TASK #7:

KEY OBJECTIVES:

2. generating ideas to defend a position

4. selecting examples to support ideas

6. prioritizing reasons from less important to more important

PROMPT: Shopping malls have become places for people to socialize. Families go to the mall together, teenagers meet their friends there, and clubs and social organizations frequently sponsor activities at the mall. WRITE A 200-WORD COMPOSITION DISCUSSING SEVERAL REASONS PEOPLE ARE ATTRACTED TO SHOPPING MALLS.

PREWRITING:

Thought Questions:

1. Which sentences give background information to get us thinking about the question?

2. Which sentence(s) tells us what to do?

3. What are important words in this question that help you understand the assignment more clearly?

4. Do you like to spend time at the local shopping malls?

5. Do you go just to shop or do you enjoy shopping malls for other reasons?

6. What are some different reasons people might go to the mall?

Activities:

LIST: Write down at least five reasons people enjoy malls. Stretch your mind to consider any possible reason.

ORGANIZING:

CHOOSE: Pick two or three important reasons people spend time in malls.

CLUSTER: Using "key words" (categories) to represent these reasons, cluster examples and details that can be used to support them.

DISCUSS (optional): Share your reasons and supporting examples with the group, teacher, or tutor.

PRIORITIZE: Arrange your reasons from least important to most important.

**WRITING:** Attract the reader's attention with an interesting opening comment about shopping malls. In this INTRODUCTION you can then rewrite the topic as a statement of the main idea.

In each paragraph in the BODY of the essay (composition) explain a particular reason people are attracted to malls. Use the examples and details that you have clustered around each "key word" to develop your paragraph.

In the CONCLUSION summarize the main ideas in the composition.

**EDITING:** Check your paper carefully in order to correct errors in spelling, punctuation, grammar, or usage. Look at the EDITING BOX to see if there is a specific skill you should be checking.

**REREADING:** Read the prompt AND your paper again to make sure that you have answered the question that was asked. Make sure the ideas make sense and are expressed clearly.

**********

ADDITIONAL PROMPT:

Increased drug and alcohol abuse is a problem that concerns many people. The misuse of drugs and alcohol is so common in athletics that testing programs have been set up for athletes. Certainly, many parents are worried about their children becoming involved with drugs or alcohol. WRITE A 200 WORD COMPOSITION DISCUSSING SEVERAL REASONS WHY PEOPLE ABUSE DRUGS OR ALCOHOL. WHY ARE THEY ATTRACTED TO THESE SUBSTANCES IN SPITE OF THE DANGERS?

WRITING TASK #8:

KEY OBJECTIVES:

4. supporting main ideas

5. expressing an opinion on a given topic

6. keeping all sentences in a paragraph related to the topic

PROMPT: Many people are interested in physical fitness and good health today. Jane Fonda sells workout tapes to help us get in shape. Health food stores remind us that "We are what we eat!" Everybody seems to want to look good and feel good. WRITE A PAPER DISCUSSING SOME OF THE CAUSES FOR THIS INCREASED INTEREST IN OUR BODIES. THEN TELL HOW THIS INTEREST IS BOTH BENEFICIAL AND HARMFUL TO PEOPLE. BE SURE TO SUPPORT YOUR OPINIONS WITH GOOD REASONS.

PREWRITING: Thought Questions:

1. Which sentences give background information to get us thinking about the question?

2. Which sentence(s) tells us what to do?

3. How many things must the writer do to answer this question completely? What are they?

4. What are important words in this question that help you understand the assignment more clearly?

5. Why are people more interested in health today?

6. Do people care more about the way they feel or the way they look?

7. Is this interest in our bodies positive or negative? Why?

Activities:

BRAINSTORM: Spend a few minutes thinking of reasons or factors that have caused us to be more interested in our bodies. Write down all the reasons you can think of.

**ORGANIZING:**

GROUP: Classify each reason or factor as beneficial or harmful. You can make two separate columns to list the reasons in or use codes (B and H) to categorize each.

**WRITING:** Your INTRODUCTION should be 1 or 2 sentences that tell the subject of your paper.

The BODY of the paper will be 2 paragraphs: one describing the benefits of increased interest in our bodies; one explaining how it might be harmful. Each paragraph will begin with a sentence indicating the topic.

The CONCLUSION needs to summarize the topic.

**EDITING:** Check your paper carefully in order to correct errors in spelling, punctuation, grammar, or usage. Look at the EDITING BOX to see if there is a specific skill you should be checking.

Finally, check the two paragraphs in the body of your paper to make sure that all the sentences in the paragraph on benefits are about reasons that are beneficial. Then check the other paragraph to make sure it stays on the topic of harmful effects.

**REREADING:** Read the prompt AND your paper again to make sure that you have answered the question that was asked. Make sure the ideas make sense and are expressed clearly.

**********

ADDITIONAL PROMPT:

We are well into the computer age in the United States. Banks, businesses, schools, and even churches use computers to make their work easier. Our increased use of computers has affected society in many ways. WRITE AN ESSAY DISCUSSING SOME OF THE REASONS FOR THE INCREASING USE OF COMPUTERS. THEN TELL HOW THIS HAS BEEN BOTH BENEFICIAL AND HARMFUL TO SOCIETY. BE SURE TO SUPPORT YOUR OPINIONS WITH GOOD REASONS.

WRITING TASK #9

KEY OBJECTIVES:

4. Supporting main ideas

5. Expressing an opinion on a given topic

6. Keeping all sentences in a paragraph related to the topic

PROMPT: Teenagers across the nation spend hours cruising in cars: visiting with friends, showing off their car, and finding out what's happening. Some people think cruising is an acceptable way of socializing; other people object to it. WRITE A COMPOSITION OF ABOUT 200 WORDS EXPRESSING YOUR OPINION ON CRUISING. BE SURE TO SUPPORT YOUR OPINION WITH DETAILS AND EXAMPLES!

PREWRITING: Thought Questions:

1. Which sentences give background information to get us thinking about the question?

2. Which sentence(s) tells us what to do?

3. How many things must the writer do to answer this question completely? What are they?

4. What are important words in this question that help you understand the assignment more clearly?

5. Do you or have you ever cruised?

6. Do you think it is a good activity for teenagers? Why?

7. Have you heard other people, who feel differently from you, speak about cruising? What are their ideas and feelings?

Activities:

FREEWRITE: Write about cruising to bring to mind related details and examples.

LIST: Make two lists: one list is for reasons people may approve of cruising; the other list is for reasons people disapprove.

ORGANIZING: CHOOSE: Decide which position on the topic of cruising you will take. Decide on the important reasons you will use to support your opinion.

GROUP: Choose the reasons you will use to support your opinion and group them into several categories. Check your freewriting for additional details and examples to help you develop your paragraph.

**WRITING:** Your INTRODUCTION should state your opinion on the subject.

In the BODY of your essay, you will explain the reasons that support your opinion. Each paragraph should begin with a sentence that presents a reason. The following sentences should be arranged logically to support that reason using examples and details from your freewriting.

In the CONCLUSION remind the reader of your opinion on the subject.

**EDITING:** Check your paper carefully in order to correct errors in spelling, punctuation, grammar, or usage. Look at the EDITING BOX to see if there is a specific skill you should be checking.

**REREADING:** Read the prompt AND your paper again to make sure that you have answered the question that was asked. Make sure the ideas make sense and are expressed clearly.

**********

ADDITIONAL PROMPT:

Parent and student groups are working together to alert the public to the problem of drunken driving. They are asking voters to support tougher punishments for people who drink and drive. These punishments might include losing a driver's license or going to jail. WRITE A COMPOSITION OF ABOUT 200 WORDS EXPRESSING YOUR OPINION ON TOUGHER LAWS AGAINST DRUNKEN DRIVING. BE SURE YOU SUPPORT YOUR OPINION WITH GOOD REASONS AND EXAMPLES.

WRITING TASK #10:

KEY OBJECTIVES:

4. Supporting main ideas

5. Expressing an opinion on a given topic

6. Keeping all sentences in a paragraph related to the topic

PROMPT: The American family has changed in many ways over the years. There are more single parent families, more families where both parents work, and more families with fewer children. WRITE A COMPOSITION OF ABOUT 200 WORDS DESCRIBING AN IMPORTANT CHANGE IN THE AMERICAN FAMILY. EXPRESS YOUR OPINION ABOUT WHETHER THIS CHANGE HAS HAD A POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE EFFECT ON OUR SOCIETY. BE SPECIFIC AND GIVE EXAMPLES.

PREWRITING:

Thought Questions:

1. Which sentences give background information to get us thinking about the question?

2. Which sentence(s) tells us what to do?

3. How many things must the writer do to answer this question completely? What are they?

4. What are important words in this question that help you understand the assignment more clearly?

5. Is your family different from your parents' or grandparents' family? In what ways?

6. What are the effects of these changes?

Activities:

LIST: Make two columns: changes and effects. List as many changes as you can--the ways that families are different today. Then list the effects or results of these changes. What has happened because of this change?

ORGANIZING:

GROUP: Put the changes into groups. Consider specific categories, such as raising children and time spent together.

CHOOSE: Decide on one change in the family which you want to be the focus of your paper. Take another look at your list of effects to see if you can add to it for the change you will be discussing in your paper.

**WRITING:** The INTRODUCTION presents the topic of your paper, telling the reader which change in the American family you will be writing about. Also tell the reader whether you think the results of this change have been good or bad.

In the BODY of your paper write about this change and the effects of this change: one paragraph will describe the change itself. A second paragraph will discuss the effects of this change.

Write a CONCLUSION reminding the reader of your main idea.

**EDITING:** Check your paper carefully in order to correct errors in spelling, punctuation, grammar, or usage. Look at the EDITING BOX to see if there is a specific skill you should be checking.

**REREADING:** Read the prompt AND your paper again to make sure that you have answered the question that was asked. Make sure the ideas make sense and are expressed clearly.

**********

ADDITIONAL PROMPT:

Americans enjoy many different types of music: rock, gospel, jazz, or country. Everyone has a favorite type. While we may not agree which kind of music is best, most people are aware that music affects our moods and can have tremendous impact on our lives. CHOOSE ONE SPECIFIC TYPE OF MUSIC THAT YOU BELIEVE AFFECTS THE LIVES OF LISTENERS TODAY. WRITE A COMPOSITION ABOUT HOW THIS MUSIC AFFECTS THEM IN EITHER A POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE WAY. INCLUDE SPECIFIC DETAILS AND EXAMPLES TO SUPPORT YOUR OPINION.

# APPENDIX

## WRITING TASK #1:

We usually remember experiences which have affected us in some important way. They may have caused a change in our attitude, or our behavior. Because these experiences stand out in our memory, we often can recall specific details of the situation: where it happened, what sounds we heard or what feelings we experienced. Write a paper in which you describe an experience you remember because it affected you in some way. After you describe the experience in detail, tell what you think the effect of this experience was on you. What do you think you learned from the experience? How do you think you changed as a result of this experience?

PREWRITING: Thought Questions:

1. Which sentences give background information to get us thinking about the question?

2. Which sentence(s) tells us what to do?

3. How many things must the writer do to answer this question completely? What are they?

4. What are important words in this question that help you understand the assignment more clearly?

5. What is the difference between describing the experience and telling about its effect on you?

6. What experiences are you more likely to remember--good or bad?

7. What kinds of details can you remember about your experiences: sounds, sights, smells, tastes, and feelings?

8. How do our experiences affect our lives?

9. What kinds of lessons do we learn from our experiences?

Activities:

LIST: Write down at least five experiences that you can remember.

FREEWRITE: Choose one experience from the list and describe it in detail.

DISCUSS: Share your freewriting with the group or your teacher/tutor. Discuss how this experience affected you or what you learned from it.

ORGANIZING: As you organize your thoughts and ideas to get ready to write, remember that the experience you're retelling is like a story: things happened in a certain order. Look at your freewriting to make sure you have the right sequence or chronological order for the things that happened.

WRITING: Now you're ready to start writing. Remember to start the first paragraph with a sentence that tells the main idea of the paper: the reason this experience is important. Your description of the experience comes next. After you have described the experience, start a new paragraph to explain how the experience affected you.

EDITING: Check your paper carefully in order to correct errors in spelling, punctuation, grammar, or usage. You should check your paper to make sure that, as you told your story, you used past tense verbs.

If possible, have another student in your writing class read your paper and make suggestions about corrections or ideas that could be made more clear.

REREADING: Read the prompt AND your paper again to make sure that you have answered the question that was asked. Make sure the ideas make sense and are expressed clearly.

We usually remember experiences which have affected us in some important way. They may have caused a change in our attitude, or our behavior. Because these experiences stand out in our memory, we often can recall specific details of the situation: where it happened, what sounds we heard or what feelings we experienced. Write a paper in which you describe an experience you remember because it affected you in some way. After you describe the experience in detail, tell what you think the effect of this experience was on you. What do you think you learned from the exerience? How do you think you changed as a result of this experience?

Task 1:1

Holidays are usually thought of as happy times when families celebrate together and enjoy traditions. But psychologists have found that for some people holidays can be difficult or depressing. Describe a specific holiday experience you remember that was difficult or sad for you. After you describe the situation in detail, try to explain why this particular holiday was hard for you.

Task 1:2

## WRITING TASK #2

Many people in our lives have had a positive effect on us. It might have been a grandparent who shared their time and experience with us. Perhaps it was a boss who gave us an opportunity to show what we could do. Write a paper describing someone who has had a positive effect on you. Give specific details about this person and how they changed or influenced your life.

PREWRITING: Thought Questions:

1. Which sentences give background information to get us thinking about the question?

2. Which sentence(s) tells us what to do?

3. What are the important words in this question that help you understand the assignment more clearly?

4. Who are some of the people that have affected you?

5. In what ways do people affect our lives?

Activities:

FREEWRITE: Write as much as you can about the person you will be describing in order to remember more details.

LIST: List the ways this person affected you.

DISCUSS: Read your freewriting and then tell how this person affected you.

ORGANIZING:

GROUP: Put details about similar ideas together to describe the person's appearance, attitudes, behaviors, etc.

CHOOSE: Select the most important way this person affected you and explain the effect this person had on your life.

WRITING: Introduce your subject: Restate the topic as a main idea sentence by telling the reader whom you will be describing and how this person affected you.

Write a paragraph which describes the person. Then write a paragraph explaining the person's effect on you.

Write a concluding comment. Be creative!

EDITING: Check your paper to catch any errors in grammar, spelling, punctuation, or usage. Check the EDITING BOX on your student record sheet to see which specific skill you should be editing for on this paper.

If possible work with another student to get their suggestions for corrections or clarifications.

REREADING: Read the prompt AND your paper again to be sure you have answered the question being asked. Your ideas should be communicated clearly and make sense when the paper is read as a whole.

Many people in our lives have had a positive effect on us. It might have been a grandparent who shared their time and experience with us. Perhaps it was a boss who gave us an opportunity to show what we could do. Write a paper describing someone who has had a positive effect on you. Give specific details about this person and how they changed or influenced your life.

Task 2:1

We've all had teachers we'll never forget! Sometimes we remember them because they taught us to love learning. Sometimes we remember teachers because of negative things that happened in their class. Sometimes, they just had a funny name or some unusual habit that sticks in our memory. Write a composition about a teacher you remember, describing the teacher and the classroom in as much detail as you can. Then tell why you think this teacher is someone you've remembered over the years!

Task 2:2

## WRITING TASK #3

A tornado warning has just been announced over the radio! You must leave your house and go to a nearby city. You can only take three objects with you. What would you take? Write a composition in which you tell what three objects you would take in this situation. Describe each object in detail and give reasons for your choices.

PREWRITING: Thought Questions:

1. Which sentences give background information to get you thinking about the question?

2. Which sentence(s) tells us what to do for this paper?

3. What are the important words in this question that help you understand the assignment more clearly?

4. Have you ever been in a similar situation--a tornado, flood, or fire?

5. Would you want to take objects you might need for survival or objects of sentimental value?

6. What factors would influence your choice?

Activities:

LIST: List at least ten objects you might take. Don't limit yourself at this stage. Write down every object you can think of that you might want to take.

DISCUSS: Choose one object from the list and describe it in detail to the group or your teacher/tutor. Tell why you would take it.

ORGANIZING: CHOOSE: Decide which three objects on your list you would take.

CLUSTER: Around each object note descriptive details and possible reasons for taking it.

WRITING: Introduce the subject by explaining the situation. Remember your INTRODUCTION should set the stage for the reader. Be sure to tell why you are having to leave your home and being forced to make these choices.

(Example: After cleaning house all day, I sat down to have some iced tea and watch T.V. Suddenly a broadcaster interrupted the program and announced a tornado watch. I was told to leave my house for a shelter in a nearby city. I could take only three items with me, so I had to make some decisions.)

Then restate the topic as a main idea sentence.

(Example: I decided to take my photo album, my grandmother's teapot, and a flashlight.)

After introducing the topic, write a paragraph about each object. These three paragraphs will form what is called the BODY of the paper, the main part. In each of the three paragraphs, you describe one object and then tell why you are taking it.

Finally write a CONCLUSION that reminds the reader of the purpose, or reason, for this composition.

(Example: It was hard deciding what to take, but I felt comfortable with my choices as I left the house.)

EDITING: Check your paper for errors in grammar, spelling, punctuation, or usage. Look at the EDITING BOX to see if there is a specific skill you should be checking.

If possible let another student read your paper. Consider their comments about corrections or ideas that could be more clear and decide on any changes you want to make.

REREADING Read the prompt AND your paper again to be sure you have answered the question being asked. Your ideas should be communicated clearly and make sense when the paper is read as a whole.

A tornado warning has just been announced over the radio! You must leave your house and go to a nearby city. You can only take three objects with you. What would you take? Write a composition in which you tell what three objects you would take in this situation. Describe each object in detail and give reasons for your choices.

Task 3:1

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The world is full of interesting people: actors, politicians, athletes, musicians, etc. Imagine that you were able to meet any three people in the world. Who would you choose? Write a composition of about 200 words identifying three people you would like to meet. Describe each person and the reasons you would like to meet them.

Task 3:2

## WRITING TASK # 4

Have you ever asked someone for directions or instructions about something and ended up being more confused after their explanation than when you started?! Being able to give clear instructions is an important skill. It requires you to organize your thoughts in a logical way and present them clearly. Write a paper in which you explain to the reader the step-by-step directions for doing something (for example, how to get children ready for school, how to decorate a birthday cake, or how to change the oil in your car). Remember to include all the information they would need to understand this process.

PREWRITING: Thought Questions:

1. Which sentences give background information to get you thinking about the question?

2. Which sentence(s) tells us what to do for this paper?

3. What are the important words in this question that help you understand the assignment more clearly?

4. What do you do or make that you could explain to another person?

5. What are some of the steps involved?

6. How might we group the steps?

Activities:

LIST: Decide on your topic. List all the different steps in this process.

ORGANIZING:

GROUP: Can you group the steps into stages?

(Example: Getting my family off to school and work).

| | |
|---|---|
| First group | 1. waking everyone up |
| Second group | 2. feeding everyone |
| Third group | 3. helping everyone get ready to leave |
| Fourth group | 4. cleaning up after the family leaves |

WRITING: Your INTRODUCTION should tell the reader what process you will describe in your paper. In the BODY of your paper each paragraph will be about a stage in the process. Each paragraph needs to include all the necessary explanation and details. Finally, write a CONCLUSION that tells the reader what the results of this process are.

EDITING: Check your paper for errors in grammar, spelling, punctuation, or usage. The EDITING BOX on your student record sheet should remind you to be especially watchful for a specific error you had problems with in your last paper.

Let another student read your paper to see if your explanation is clear and to make suggestions.

REREADING: Look again at the prompt and read it carefully. As you reread your paper, make sure it answers the question that was asked.

Have you ever asked someone for directions or instructions about something and ended up being more confused after their explanation than when you started?! Being able to give clear instructions is an important skill. It requires you to organize your thoughts in a logical way and present them clearly. Write a paper in which you explain to the reader the step-by-step directions for doing something (for example, how to get children ready for school, how to decorate a birthday cake, or how to change the oil in your car). Remember to include all the information they would need to understand this process.

Task 4:1

Recent bestsellers have discussed and debated the life stages that each of us experiences and the activities or behaviors that are typical of each. If you were asked to divide your life into three stages, what would you call each stage and how would you describe each? Write a paper identifying and describing the three stages of your life to date. Be specific and include examples when possible.

Task 4:2

## WRITING TASK #5

Every job has its good and bad points. In some jobs, the good points outweigh the bad points. Those are usually the jobs people find most rewarding! Write a paper describing a rewarding job you have had or would like to have. Explain both the advantages and disadvantages of the job. Be specific and use examples. Tell why you want this job in spite of the disadvantages.

PREWRITING: Thought Questions

1. Which sentences give background information to get us thinking about the question?

2. Which sentence(s) tells us what to do?

3. How many things must the writer do to answer this question completely? What are they?

4. What are important words in this question that help you understand the assignment more clearly?

5. Have you had a job that you liked or do you have a job in mind that you would like to have?

6. Describe that job to your teacher/tutor or the group.

7. What are the advantages of that job?

8. What are its disadvantages?

Activities:

LIST: List questions a person might ask about a job to find out its good and bad points.

BRAINSTORM: Use these questions to help you discover additional good and bad points about your "dream" job.

ORGANIZING:

GROUP: Put the ideas you discovered into two columns: advantages and disadvantages.

CHOOSE: Decide what ideas to include and what ideas to leave out of your paper. Decide if you will write about the advantages or the disadvantages first.

CATEGORIZE: Put the least important details first in your list and the most important last. Use that order when you're writing the paragraph, too.

WRITING: The INTRODUCTION for your topic should state your opinion about the job (the first paragraph).

In the BODY write two paragraphs: one telling the advantages and one describing the disadvantages of your "dream" job. The first sentence in each of the paragraphs tells the purpose of the paragraph and connects it to the main idea of the composition.

(Example: Even though this job appeals to me, there are some disadvantages.)

Write a CONCLUSION restating your opinion about this job.

EDITING: Check your paper for errors in grammar, spelling, punctuation, or usage. Look at the EDITING BOX to see if there is a specific skill you had trouble with in your last paper.

If possible let another student read your paper. Consider their comments about corrections or ideas that could be clarified.

REREADING: Read the prompt AND your paper again to make sure that you have answered the question that was asked. Make sure the ideas make sense and are expressed clearly.

Every job has its good and bad points. In some jobs, the good points outweigh the bad points. Those are usually the jobs people find most rewarding! Write a paper describing a rewarding job you have had or would like to have. Explain both the advantages and disadvantages of the job. Be specific and use examples. Tell why you want this job in spite of the disadvantages.

Task 5:1

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Television has come a long way since its introduction to the American family about 30 years ago. In those days, programs were only in black and white, and few families owned a T.V. set. Today most families own at least one T.V. and enjoy watching a variety of programs. There are both advantages and disadvantages to our growing attachment to television. Write a composition explaining the advantages and disadvantages of Americans watching more television. Be specific and support your ideas with examples.

Task 5:2

## WRITING TASK #6

Although we may consider material things important, we also value people and beliefs that are intangible: peace, love, and faith. Our values reflect our ideas of what is important in life. Write a paper about what is important in your life and why. Be sure to give specific examples whenever you can.

PREWRITING: Thought Questions:

1. Which sentences give background information to get us thinking about the question?

2. Which sentence(s) tells us what to do?

3. What are important words in this question that help you understand the assignment more clearly

4. What is important in your life?

5. What do we value about objects? about beliefs? about people?

Activities:

LIST: List at least twenty persons, objects, ideas, or feelings that are important to you.

ORGANIZING:

GROUP: How could you group your list according to some specific categories? Decide on a "keyword" for each category. (Example: hobbies, people, money, religion, learning, entertainment). You could use an abbreviated code: H = hobbies, P = people and so on. Mark your list accordingly.

CLUSTER: Decide on two or three categories that you want to write about. Cluster details and examples around each "key word".

WRITING: Introduce your subject in the first paragraph. Rewriting the topic into a statement of the main idea is often a good way to begin an INTRODUCTION.

Organize and write a paragraph around each "key word." These paragraphs will become the BODY of your paper. Remember each paragraph should start with a sentence telling what you will be writing about. The rest of the paragraph will tell why this is important to you and give examples.

The CONCLUSION of your paper can be 1 or 2 sentences summarizing what you value.

EDITING: Check your paper to catch any errors in grammar, spelling, punctuation, or usage. Check the EDITING BOX on your student record sheet to see which specific skill you should be editing for on this paper.

REREADING: Read the prompt AND your paper again to be sure you have answered the question being asked. Your ideas should be communicated clearly and make sense when the paper is read as a whole.

Although we may consider material things important, we also value people and beliefs that are intangible: peace, love, and faith. Our values reflect our ideas of what is important in life. Write a paper about what is important in your life and why. Be sure to give specific examples whenever you can.

Task 6:1

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Instead of another writing activity, you might want to have students read the Bertrand Russell essay (see appendix). Discuss how the essay was organized--Introduction, Body, Conclusion. Have them find examples or details about each value. In other words, work backwards to see how this writer put his ideas together.

Task 6:2

## WRITING TASK #7

Shopping malls have become places for people to socialize. Families go to the mall together, teenagers meet their friends there, and clubs and social organizations frequently sponsor activities at the mall. Write a 200-word composition discussing several reasons people are attracted to shopping malls.

PREWRITING: Thought Questions:

1. Which sentences give background information to get us thinking about the question?

2. Which sentence(s) tells us what to do?

3. What are important words in this question that help you understand the assignment more clearly?

4. Do you like to spend time at the local shopping malls?

5. Do you go just to shop or do you enjoy shopping malls for other reasons?

6. What are some different reasons people might go to the mall?

Activities:

LIST: Write down at least five reasons people enjoy malls. Stretch your mind to consider any possible reason.

ORGANIZING:

CHOOSE: Pick two or three important reasons people spend time in malls.

CLUSTER: Using "key words" (categories) to represent these reasons, cluster examples and details that can be used to support them.

DISCUSS: (optional) Share your reasons and supporting examples with the group, teacher, or tutor.

PRIORITIZE: Arrange your reasons from least important to most important.

WRITING: Attract the reader's attention with an interesting opening comment about shopping malls. In this INTRODUCTION you can then rewrite the topic as a statement of the main idea.

In each paragraph in the BODY of the essay (composition) explain a particular reason people are attracted to malls. Use the examples and details that you have clustered around each "key word" to develop your paragraph.

In the CONCLUSION summarize the main ideas in the composition.

EDITING: Check your paper carefully in order to correct errors in spelling, punctuation, grammar, or usage. Look at the EDITING BOX to see if there is a specific skill you should be checking.

REREADING: Read the prompt AND your paper again to make sure that you have answered the question that was asked. Make sure the ideas make sense and are expressed clearly.

Shopping malls have become places for people to socialize. Families go to the mall together, teenagers meet their friends there, and clubs and social organizations frequently sponsor activities at the mall. Write a 200-word composition discussing several reasons people are attracted to shopping malls.

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Task 7:1

Increased drug and alcohol abuse is a problem that concerns many people. The misuse of drugs and alcohol is so common in athletics that testing programs have been set up for athletes. Certainly, many parents are worried about their children becoming involved with drugs or alcohol. Write a 200-word composition discussing several reasons that people abuse drugs or alcohol. Why are they attracted to these substances in spite of the dangers?

Task 7:2

## WRITING TASK #8

Many people are interested in physical fitness and good health today. Jane Fonda sells workout tapes to help us get in shape. Health food stores remind us that "We are what we eat!" Everybody seems to want to look good and feel good. Write a paper discussing some of the causes for this increased interest in our bodies. Then tell how this interest is both beneficial and harmful to people. Be sure to support your opinions with good reasons.

PREWRITING: Thought Questions:

1. Which sentences give background information to get us thinking about the question?

2. Which sentence(s) tells us what to do?

3. How many things must the writer do to answer this question completely? What are they?

4. What are important words in this question that help you understand the assignment more clearly?

5. Why are people more interested in health today?

6. Do people care more about the way they feel or the way they look?

7. Is this interest in our bodies positive or negative? Why?

Activities:

BRAINSTORM: Spend a few minutes thinking of reasons or factors that have caused us to be more interested in our bodies. Write down all the reasons you can think of.

ORGANIZING:

GROUP: Classify each reason or factor as beneficial or harmful. You can make two separate columns to list the reasons in or use codes (B and H) to categorize each.

WRITING: Your INTRODUCTION should be 1 or 2 sentences that tell the subject of your paper.

The BODY of the paper will be 2 paragraphs: one describing the benefits of increased interest in our bodies; one explaining how it might be harmful. Each paragraph will begin with a sentence indicating the topic.

The CONCLUSION needs to summarize the topic.

EDITING: Check your paper carefully in order to correct errors in spelling, punctuation, grammar, or usage. Look at the EDITING BOX to see if there is a specific skill you should be checking.

Finally, check the two paragraphs in the body of your paper to make sure that all the sentences in the paragraph on benefits are about reasons that are beneficial. Then check the other paragraph to make sure it stays on the topic of harmful effects.

REREADING: Read the prompt AND your paper again to make sure that you have answered the question that was asked. Make sure the ideas make sense and are expressed clearly.

Many people are interested in physical fitness and good health today. Jane Fonda sells workout tapes to help us get in shape. Health food stores remind us that "We are what we eat!" Everybody seems to want to look good and feel good. Write a paper discussing some of the causes for this increased interest in our bodies. Then tell how this interest is both beneficial and harmful to people. Be sure to support your opinions with good reasons.

Task 8:1

We are well into the computer age in the United States. Banks, businesses, schools, and even churches use computers to make their work easier. Our increased use of computers has affected society in many ways. Write an essay discussing some of the reasons for the increasing use of computers. Then tell how this has been both beneficial and harmful to society. Be sure to support your opinions with good reasons.

Task 8:2

## WRITING TASK #9

Teenagers across the nation spend hours cruising in cars: visiting with friends, showing off their car, and finding out what's happening. Some people think cruising is an acceptable way of socializing; other people object to it. Write a composition of about 200 words expressing your opinion on cruising. Be sure to support your opinion with details and examples

PREWRITING: Thought Questions:

1. Which sentences give background information to get us thinking about the question?

2. Which sentence(s) tells us what to do?

3. How many things must the writer do to answer this question completely? What are they?

4. What are important words in this question that help you understand the assignment more clearly?

5. Do you or have you ever cruised?

6. Do you think it is a good activity for teenagers? Why?

7. Have you heard other people, who feel differently from you, speak about cruising? What are their ideas and feelings?

Activities:

FREEWRITE: Write about cruising to bring to mind related details and examples.

LIST: Make two lists: one list is for reasons people may approve of cruising; the other list is for reasons people disapprove.

ORGANIZING: CHOOSE: Decide which position on the topic of cruising you will take. Decide on the important reasons you will use to support your opinion.

GROUP: Choose the reasons you will use to support your opinion and group them into several categories. Check your freewriting for additional details and examples to help you develop your paragraph.

WRITING: Your INTRODUCTION should state your opinion on the subject.

In the BODY of your essay, you will explain the reasons that support your opinion. Each paragraph should begin with a sentence that presents a reason. The following sentences should be arranged logically to support that reason using examples and details from your freewriting.

In the CONCLUSION remind the reader of your opinion on the subject.

EDITING: Check your paper carefully in order to correct errors in spelling, punctuation, grammar, or usage. Look at the EDITING BOX to see if there is a specific skill you should be checking.

REREADING: Read the prompt AND your paper again to make sure that you have answered the question that was asked. Make sure the ideas make sense and are expressed clearly.

Teenagers across the nation spend hours cruising in cars: visiting with friends, showing off their car, and finding out what's happening. Some people think cruising is an acceptable way of socializing; other people object to it. Write a composition of about 200 words expressing your opinion on cruising. Be sure to support your opinion with details and examples!

Task 9:1

Parent and student groups are working together to alert the public to the problem of drunken driving. They are asking voters to support tougher punishments for people who drink and drive. These punishments might include losing a driver's license or going to jail. Write a composition of about 200 words expressing your opinion on tougher laws against drunken driving. Be sure you support your opinion with good reasons and examples.

Task 9:2

## WRITING TASK #10

The American family has changed in many ways over the years. There are more single parent families, more families where both parents work, and more families with fewer children. Write a composition of about 200 words describing an important change in the American family. Express your opinion about whether this change has had a positive or negative effect on our society. Be specific and give examples.

PREWRITING: Thought Questions:

1. Which sentences give background information to get us thinking about the question?

2. Which sentence(s) tells us what to do?

3. How many things must the writer do to answer this question completely? What are they?

4. What are important words in this question that help you understand the assignment more clearly?

5. Is your family different from your parents' or grandparents' family? In what ways?

6. What are the effects of these changes?

Activities:

LIST: Make two columns: changes and effects. List as many changes as you can--the ways that families are different today. Then list the effects or results of these changes. What has happened because of this change?

ORGANIZING:

GROUP: Put the changes into groups. Consider specific categories, such as raising children and time spent together.

CHOOSE: Decide on one change in the family which you want to be the focus of your paper. Take another look at your list of effects to see if you can add to it for the change you will be discussing in your paper.

WRITING: The INTRODUCTION presents the topic of your paper, telling the reader which change in the American family you will be writing about. Also tell the reader whether you think the results of this change have been good or bad.

In the BODY of your paper write about this change and the effects of this change: one paragraph will describe the change itself. A second paragraph will discuss the effects of this change.

Write a CONCLUSION reminding the reader of your main idea.

EDITING: Check your paper carefully in order to correct errors in spelling, punctuation, grammar, or usage. Look at the EDITING BOX to see if there is a specific skill you should be checking.

REREADING: Read the prompt AND your paper again to make sure that you have answered the question that was asked. Make sure the ideas make sense and are expressed clearly.

The American family has changed in many ways over the years. There are more single parent families, more families where both parents work, and more families with fewer children. Write a composition of about 200 words describing an important change in the American family. Express your opinion about whether this change has had a positive or negative effect on our society. Be specific and give examples.

Task 10:1

Americans enjoy many different types of music. Rock, gospel, jazz or country. Everyone has a favorite type. While we may not agree which kind of music is best, most people are aware that music affects our moods and can have tremendous impact on our lives. Choose one specific type of music that you believe affects the lives of listeners today. Write a composition about how this music affects them in either a positive or negative way. Include specific details and examples to support your opinion.

Task 10:2

ADDITIONAL REPRODUCIBLE SHEETS

STUDENT RECORD SHEET: (name)_____

| Date | Topic | Comments | EDITING BOX |
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## POWER

**PREWRITING:** Before you can begin to write a composition you must recall as many ideas about your subject as possible. There are several good strategies you can use to help you generate ideas.

(1) BRAINSTORMING: Think about the general topic and jot down your thoughts as they occur.

(2) FREEWRITING: Write about the general topic without stopping. Write as quickly as you can for at least ten minutes. Just think about getting your ideas down on paper. Don't worry about correct writing! Look carefully at what you've written to get ideas for your paper.

(3) LISTING: This is a little more specific. You may focus on a certain part of the topic and then write ideas as they come to you.

(4) DISCUSSING: Discussion can be general or specific--in small groups or with just another person. Sharing ideas with others is a good way to clarify your ideas and may help you see other ways to look at your topic.

**ORGANIZING:** The ideas you developed in the prewriting stage need to be considered carefully as you prepare to write your paper. Here are some specific skills to help you get your ideas organized.

(1) CHOOSING: An important skill in writing is using only the ideas or information that relates to your topic. There will be ideas that are interesting in your prewriting work but just don't fit the paper you're planning. Weed those out!

(2) GROUPING/CATEGORIZING/CLASSIFYING: These are good ways of putting ideas together into a bigger picture. You consider how individual ideas might relate to each other and help you develop your topic.

(3) CLUSTERING: As you look at your ideas, you may see a couple of key concepts or ideas you want to develop. Circle them or write them down and then use arrows or other symbols to connect your other ideas to the "key word".

(4) PRIORITIZE: Sometimes ideas need to be organized according to some order: sequence, importance, or chronology.

**WRITING:** Once your ideas are more organized, you'll be able to see how to work them into the basic expository form: introduction, body and conclusion. You'll want to be sure to include specific details and examples from your prewriting work to support your ideas. The organization strategies you used earlier should result in a more logical presentation of your ideas.

**EDITING:** This is the time to look at your writing for correctness in punctuation, usage, grammar, and spelling.

**REREADING:** As you read your final paper make sure you stayed on the topic and that your ideas are clearly expressed!

# What I Have Lived For

BERTRAND RUSSELL

Bertrand Russell, an English mathematician and philosopher, lived from 1872 to 1970. He wrote numerous books in both mathematics and philosophy, taught at universities in England and the United States, and won the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1950. Russell is known also for his controversial beliefs on pacifism, communism, religion, marriage, and education—all subjects on which he has written. His autobiography, completed when he was ninety years old, is a three-volume compilation of letters he wrote and received throughout his lifetime. The essay below is his Prologue to the first volume. Writing in his old age, Russell summarized the meaning of his remarkable life.

1 Three passions, simple but overwhelmingly strong, have governed my life: the longing for love, the search for knowledge, and unbearable pity for the suffering of mankind. These passions, like great winds, have blown me hither and thither, in a wayward course, over a deep ocean of anguish, reaching to the very verge of despair.

2 I have sought love, first, because it brings ecstasy—ecstasy so great that I would often have sacrificed all the rest of life for a few hours of this joy. I have sought it, next, because it relieves loneliness—that terrible loneliness in which one shivering consciousness looks over the rim of the world into the cold unfathomable lifeless abyss. I have sought it, finally, because in the union of love I have seen, in a mystic miniature, the prefiguring vision of the heaven that saints and poets have imagined. This is what I sought, and though it might seem too good for human life, this is what—at last—I have found.

3 With equal passion I have sought knowledge. I have wished to understand the hearts of men. I have wished to know why the stars shine. And I have tried to apprehend the Pythagorean power by which number holds sway above the flux. A little of this, but not much, I have achieved.

4 Love and knowledge, so far as they were possible, led upward toward the heavens. But always pity brought me back to earth. Echoes of cries of pain reverberate in my heart.

Children in famine, victims tortured by oppressors, helpless old people a hated burden to their sons, and the whole world of loneliness, poverty, and pain make a mockery of what human life should be. I long to alleviate the evil, but I cannot, and I too suffer.

This has been my life. I have found it worth living, and would gladly live it again if the chance were offered me.

## Questions for Discussion

1. Bertrand Russell's "What I Have Lived For" is a near-perfect example of the five-paragraph essay. It begins with a precise, direct statement of thesis followed by three clear-cut paragraphs of discussion and is fitly ended with a forthright conclusion. Its simple outline follows:

   I. Introduction
      A. Thesis statement
      B. Writer's position on subject
   II. Love
      A. Ecstasy
      B. Relief from loneliness
      C. Vision of heaven
   III. Knowledge
      A. Hearts of men
      B. Stars
      C. Number
   IV. Pity
      A. Cries of pain
      B. Longing to alleviate evil
   V. Conclusion

   The number *three* seems to give the essay balance and order. The essay begins by indicating three points for discussion, and the paragraphs on love and knowledge are divided into three parts too. While the paragraph on pity is not divided into three, the final sentence in the paragraph has three coordinated statements. *Do you think the balance was a help to you as a reader, or was it too obvious as a structural pattern? Support your answer with your responses to specific parts of the essay.*

2. Not only does Russell carefully balance his points, he also carefully arranges them for maximum effect. He begins with the two passions he sought—love and knowledge—then contrasts the unsought passion, pity. The effect is another kind of balance, this time underscoring the concept that life consists of what seeks us out as well as what we go searching for. *Discuss what the effect might have been if Russell had started with pity and left the paragraph on love, his largest, till last. One reasonable way to organize an essay is to save the strongest point for last.*

3. Russell uses no specific examples in developing his paragraphs. *Do you think he should have? Does he make statements that demand illustrations?*

   For the most part, Russell explains his statements with specific language. He amplifies, for example, his references to ecstasy, loneliness, and the vision of heaven. Loneliness is "one shivering consciousness" looking over "the rim of the world into the cold unfathomable lifeless abyss." The vision of heaven is seen in "mystic miniature" and imagined by "saints and poets." *Find other instances of specific words that clarify Russell's statements.*

4. The thesis statement of "What I Have Lived For" (Russell's opening sentence) follows a common pattern: an assertion about the subject followed by the points to be discussed. A colon separates the two. It is also a well-phrased thesis statement because it does two things: (a) it presents the subject, and (b) it gives a point, or meaning, to the subject. In this essay the subject is "three passions in my life." The point is that these passions have governed Russell's life. So a statement like "There are three passions in my life" presents only the subject and, because it has no point, is not a thesis statement.

# What I Have Lived For

1 Three passions, simple but overwhelmingly strong, have governed my life: the longing for love, the search for knowledge, and unbearable pity for the suffering of mankind. These passions, like great winds, have blown me hither and thither, in a wayward course, over a deep ocean of anguish, reaching to the very verge of despair.

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## What I Have Lived For

by Bertrand Russell

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